

A2 3. (amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising subjecting said silicon nitride layer to a power of between about 300 watts and about 600 watts during said etching.

Sub 3 8. (amended) A method used during the formation of a semiconductor device comprising:

A3 providing a semiconductor wafer assembly comprising at least one of a layer of silicon and a layer of silicon dioxide;

forming a layer of silicon nitride over said at least one of said layer of silicon and said layer of silicon dioxide;

etching said silicon nitride in the absence of a photoresist layer with an etch consisting essentially of oxygen and one of CHF_3 and CH_2F_2 and a pressure of between about 10 millitorr and about 60 millitorr, wherein said etch exposes said at least one of said layer of silicon and said layer of silicon dioxide.

9. (amended) A method used during the formation of a semiconductor device comprising:

providing a semiconductor wafer assembly comprising a silicon wafer and a layer of silicon dioxide overlying said wafer;

A3 ^{end}
forming a layer of silicon nitride over said silicon wafer and over said layer of silicon dioxide;

placing said semiconductor wafer assembly into an etch chamber;

etching said silicon nitride layer in the absence of a photoresist layer using an etch consisting essentially of oxygen and one of CHF_3 and CH_2F_2 and a pressure of between about 10 millitorr and about 60 millitorr to expose said ~~silicon dioxide layer and said silicon wafer.~~

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12. (amended) The method of claim 11 further comprising subjecting said silicon nitride layer to a power of between about 300 watts and about 600 watts during said etching.